

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 15-53 are pending. Claim 14 has been canceled without prejudice.
Claims 1, 10, 11, 26-28, 38, 39, and 49 have been amended.

Initially, Applicants note that the correspondence address for this application has changed. A Revocation and New Power of Attorney is submitted herewith.

Applicants will cooperate with the Examiner in correcting any errors in the specification of which Applicants become aware.

Claims 1-9, 28-34, and 39-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 5,863,801 to Southgate ("Southgate").

Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 28-34, 39, and 41-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 5,750,015 to Soane et al. ("Soane").

Claims 1-9, 28-34, and 39-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 6,033,546 to Ramsey ("Ramsey").

Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 28-34, 39, and 41-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 5,885,470 to Parce et al. ("Parce").

Claims 1-9, 28-34, and 39-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Handique et al. The undersigned understands from a March 29, 2004 with the Examiner that "Handique" refers to U.S. patent no. 6,130,098 to Handique et al.

Claims 10-12, 14-22, 24-27, 35-38, and 46-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Soane in view of Handique.

As amended herein, independent claims 1, 28, 38, and 39 refer to (a) heating a gas to generate a gas pressure and (b) determining, utilizing at least one internal component, the presence or absence of a micro-droplet at a selected position.

Independent claims 27 and 49 refer to (a) heating a gas to generate a gas pressure and (b) sensing, utilizing at least one internal component, the presence or absence of a micro-droplet at a selected position.

Independent claim 26 refers to sensing the presence or absence of a micro-droplet at a selected position in a selected passage by internal components acting as a micro-droplet presence

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sensor by sensing an indicator of the thermal capacity in a region about the position.

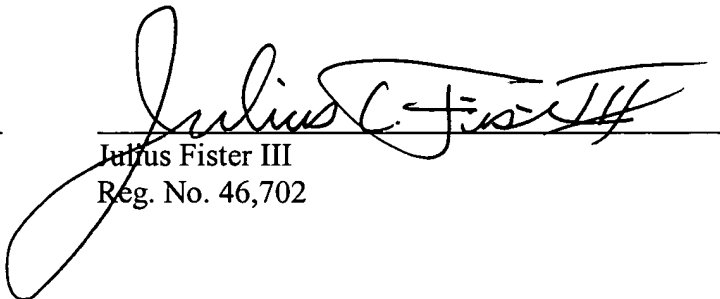
It is submitted that no combination of the cited references discloses or suggests the presently recited invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the rejections set forth in the Office Action have been overcome.

Enclosed is a \$210 check for a Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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